

Starting a Business FAQ

I got a great idea but know little about business. Where should I start?

The Idaho Department of Commerce publishes a comprehensive booklet entitled, [Starting a Business in Idaho](#) that will answer some of your questions as well as provide the names and phone numbers for getting those answers not covered in the book. Also, you can call our office at 208.334.2470 and speak with a Business Development Specialist. The publication is also available in [Spanish](#). Another great resource is [Idaho's Small Business Development Centers](#). Located across the state the Small Business Development Centers offer face to face counseling, workshops, the [Business Start Up Guide](#) and the interactive [idahobizhelp](#) website.

I have an invention that may be patentable. Where do I go to get information and help on this process and seeing if it is a good business idea?

[Idaho Tech Connect](#) an organization with offices across the state exist to help Idaho businesses access the resources necessary to commercialize private, university and government technologies.

Do I need a business license?

In most cases, the State of Idaho does not issue nor requires businesses licenses. One exception to this statement is in the area of construction contracting. Construction contractors in Idaho are required to [register](#) with the state and firms working on projects for cities, counties and the State of Idaho are required to have a [public works licenses](#). Cities and Counties in Idaho are permitted to issue businesses licenses so contact the city or county clerk before starting a business.

Do I need an occupational or profession licenses?

Idaho does issue licenses for a number of occupations and professions. To see if your occupation is covered by a licensing requirement contact the [Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licenses](#).

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Does Idaho offer grants for people starting new businesses?

No. The state does not offer grants to start new businesses. There are a number of lending programs to help new businesses get started.

Are there any grants available to businesses?

Businesses creating new jobs that meet certain requirements may be eligible for [Idaho's Workforce Development Training Fund](#). Entrepreneurs working on new inventions may qualify for federal [Small Business Innovation Research Grants](#) and businesses producing energy from renewable resources may be eligible for assistance through the United States Department of Agriculture's [Energy Programs](#). Businesses needing roads or other infrastructure enhancements may be able to partner with their city or county and get financial help for those improvements through Idaho Commerce's [community grant programs](#).

Where do I find out about any tax incentives that might be available to my business?

Idaho Commerce's publication [Idaho's Inviting Business Incentives](#) provides a good summary of tax and other incentives available business. The [Idaho Tax Commission](#) is another good resource for addressing the specifics related to your company. The great thing about our incentives is that they are available to any company (new, old, instate, out of state) meeting the minimum requirements.

What is a business plan?

A business plan is a formal statement of a set of business goals, the reasons why they are believed attainable, and the plan for reaching those goals. The plan should contain background information about the persons owning and managing the firm including their financial capacity, a proposed business structure

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(corporation, sole proprietorship etc) and metric (numbers) supported market research.

Why do I need a business plan?

Without a formal business plan the chances of getting loan or attracting investors are nil.

Where can I find help developing a business plan?

The nearest [Idaho Small Business Development Center](#).

Where should I go to get a business loan?

A good starting point is your local bank. Many banks in Idaho partner up with [United States Small Business Administration](#) to offer loans for business start ups and expansion. In addition to private banks Idaho is served by [community development corporations](#) that maintain their own lending programs as well as broker deals with private banks and government agencies. A list of these community development lenders may be found in the *Starting a Business in Idaho* publication.

Where can I go to learn about any permitting requirements impacting my businesses?

The answer to this question will be dictated by what you're doing, where you're doing it and how you're doing it. First, you should check in with the city and county clerk to learn about any local requirements. Second, if your business will consume large amounts of water you should contact the [Idaho Department of Water Resources](#) to be sure that your water needs can be accommodated within

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existing water rights. If your business will be discharging water (other than toilets and sinks), using and disposing of toxic materials or putting anything into the air then contact the [Idaho Department of Environmental Quality](#). If your business is producing something that will be eaten or applied to the human skin then contact [Central District Health](#). If your business is in the field of agriculture or you will be selling items by weight or volume then contact that [Idaho Department of Agriculture](#).

Who do I talk to about any taxes that my business might be responsible for?

Generally speaking, your primary point of contact on all state tax issues will be the [Idaho Tax Commission](#). Questions about unemployment insurance taxes should be directed to the [Idaho Department of Labor](#).

How do I register or incorporate a business in Idaho?

In Idaho the [Secretary of State](#) handles “business entity filings” which include but not limited to articles of incorporation, assumed business names (dba), general partnerships, and limited liability corporations (LLCs).

Should I incorporate my business?

That question is best answered by your accountants and attorneys. At the very least it is a good idea to create and register an [assumed business name](#). Many lenders and other business might not want to work with you unless you have a registered assumed business name.

What resources are available to help my business recruit employees?

The [Idaho Department of Labor](#) offers a number of free services to businesses looking to recruit new employees. Services range from listing openings on the

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internet to screening and matching referrals from their data bank of job seekers. Local Idaho Labor offices can provide businesses with temporary space for conducting interviews and testing job applicants.

What resources are available to women and minority owned businesses?

The Idaho Transportation Department's [Disadvantage Business Enterprise](#) Program offers a number of services to help minority and women owned businesses compete for transportation contracts. Links to other resources for women and minority owned businesses may be found [here](#).

Where should I go to learn about selling to the government?

The [Idaho Business Network](#) is a one stop shop for Idaho businesses wanting to enter the lucrative world of government contracting. Using specially designed bid tracking software to access a variety of procurement systems, the Idaho Business Network alerts you to potential new customers and provides information on new opportunities that match your company's product and service profile. The [Idaho Business Network](#) is a service available to all Idaho businesses and is a great tool to expand your sales and marketing reach. Best of all, if you opt to receive your bid notification by e-mail, your IBN membership is free.

What is a HUBZone and how might it help my business?

[HUBZone](#) is a US Small Business Administration (SBA) program to help small companies that operate and employ people in historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUB Zones). Certified businesses in a HUBZone may qualify for federal contracting preferences.